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## Casey Cattleman's Association responds to comments

Dear Editor,

The article by Al Cross in The Advocate-Messenger on June 27 and a recent story in The Casey County News on July 12 may have caused some readers to conclude that Casey County Cattleman's Association has been doing something terribly wrong. I am very confident that any audit will reveal that the Cattleman's Association has complied with applicable rules and regulations.

Comments by Keith Rogers, executive director for the Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy, are rather surprising. I think that eventually Mr. Rogers will realize his mistakes. In response to the Al Cross article, Mr. Rogers told me the issue of non-compliance stems from our use of a waiting list and first-come, first-served approach rather than some point-scoring system to determine which cost share program applicants are served and in what order. That was the only issue he mentioned to me.

Two documents provide the rules and regulations now applicable to the Cattleman's Association: (1) the 2005 guidelines for the Cattle Handling Facilities Program and (2) a letter from Keith Rogers dated September 22, 2005. We are not in violation of either in any manner. The guidelines permit use of the first-come, first-served approach to serving applicants and also the use of a waiting list. The letter from Mr. Rogers summarizes a meeting on Sept. 15, 2005. At the meeting, Mr. Rogers asked the Cattleman's Association to convert our waiting list of applicants to a file of application documents. The waiting list is a sequentially numbered list of names for applicants with telephone numbers. The application document contains the name, address, telephone number, Social Security Number and farm number assigned by Casey County Farm Service Agency. Mr. Rogers states that conversion from the waiting list to the application file was not to change the position of any applicant to be served. Mr. Rogers also required that enrollment in the Cattle Handling program be opened to new applicants. (Previously, the Casey County Agricultural Development Council has voted to close the enrollment.) Any new applicants were to be placed behind those already on the waiting list and then be served on a first-come, first-served basis. Once the applications file was developed, the waiting list was then to end and be replaced by the applications file.

I have done what Mr. Rogers requested.

I have questioned Al Cross on his understanding of the rules violations mentioned in his article. Mr. Cross gave an explanation different from Mr. Rogers, saying the non-compliance issue related to one of nine allegations made by Marion Murphy. Mr. Murphy was a previous chairman of the Casey County Ag Council appointed by the FSA Committee. Mr. Cross could not tell me which allegation applied and advised me to contact Mr. Rogers. He also suggested that I read reports prepared by his students on an Internet Web site. I have done so. I find that Mr. Cross and his journalism students at UK have distributed some very misleading reports making use of allegations by Mr. Murphy. Other members of the Ag Council voted down every modification proposed by Mr. Murphy for modification of cost share programs.

To better understand the motives of Mr. Rogers and Mr. Cross, I have more investigative work to do. Why should I and the Cattleman's Association have been singled out for criticism when two other program administrators serving Casey County also have been using wait lists? According to another newspaper, Mr. Rogers has already placed the Cattleman's Association on some type of probation. I did

not know about this until reading about it in the paper. I have suspicions as to what forces have been at work. Kentucky politics have been said to be "dog eat dog" by an outspoken figure in Republican politics within Casey County. Having been poked at from time to time over the past five years for my role with Casey County Cattleman's Association, my appetite for dog is increasing.

**James D. Young**  
**Hustonville**

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